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Victims and Witnesses Honored
2009 Outstanding Citizen Awards Ceremony

From April 26 – May 2, 2009, the nation will observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf will be honored with rallies, candlelight vigils, and a host of commemorative activities across the country.

In recognition of victims and victims' rights, District Attorney Jan Scully will present the Sacramento County District Attorney's Outstanding Citizen Award to victims and witnesses who have shown uncommon courage. Each of these recipients demonstrated extraordinary bravery and social consciousness through their cooperation with our criminal justice system. Please join in this very special ceremony.

District Attorney's 10th Annual Outstanding Citizen Awards Ceremony

Friday, May 1, 2009

9:30am to 11:00am

Board of Supervisors' Chambers - 700 H Street, Sacramento

19 year old **Eric Mee**, served as a human shield to protect a friend's 7-year old daughter from a knife attack. In the struggle to keep himself between the young girl and defendant John Sarem, Eric was stabbed in the chest. Even when injured, Eric continued to protect the young girl and positioned himself so she could not see his stab wound. Hearing the screams, two 17 year old strangers, **Alexander C.** and **Moses G. Jr.**, called 911 and applied first aid to Eric's chest wound, saving his life. As a result of the tremendous loss of blood, Eric's optic nerves died and he is now blind. It was Eric's extraordinary act of selflessness and courage that spared the little girl from suffering any harm or trauma from this senseless attack. Sarem was convicted and sentenced to 12 years and 4 months in prison.

Abigayl (Abi) H., Josh H., John H., Sarah L., and Keliha L., are among 18 victims of a multi-generational cult, where children were sexually and physically abused. At the 2003-2004 trial, Abi, Sarah, Keliha, Josh, and John testified against Alan H. and his wife (Abi, Josh and John's parents) despite warnings from their childhood that they would suffer "blood atonement" (death) if they told their secrets. In 2004, Sarah and Keliha helped the FBI form a case against Michael and Juliette L. (the girls' parents) for the interstate transportation of children. In 2008, all the children again had to testify in a federal jury trial. In 2009, all the children again testified in a state court trial against Michael L. Thanks to the tremendous endurance and courage of these individuals, the generational cycle of sexual abuse was put to an end. Alan H. was sentenced to 400 plus years to life and Michael L. faces up to 105 years to life.

Shortly after an ice cream man was robbed and shot, **Meuy Koun Saechao** saw defendant Shawn Moore running toward her with a gun. Scared for her life, Meuy ran for safety but not before getting a good look at Moore's face. Despite living in a neighborhood where it's unacceptable and dangerous to cooperate with police, Meuy did the right thing by providing a statement to police and identifying Shawn Moore as the attacker. Though scared, she testified at the preliminary hearing and again identified Moore. At trial, she again testified even though she wasn't feeling well. She became so ill the day of her testimony, the court recessed early for the night. The next day, Meuy was in a coma after suffering a brain aneurism. Though she was not expected to live, Meuy miraculously recovered. In her medical absence, Meuy's preliminary hearing testimony was used at trial. Her determination and courage to serve as a star witness is even more incredible given that her own son was murdered prior to this case. Moore is serving 32 years to life.

Chrysta W. was getting her hair done by a close family friend when serial robber Kenneth Rhodes entered the salon. After stealing money from the cash drawer, he forced the two women to lie on the floor and remove their clothing. He proceeded to sexually assault Chrysta. As the assault was occurring, Chrysta fought back with great force until Rhodes retreated and fled the scene. Rhodes was arrested in Fresno for a string of six robberies 12 days after the attack. After a long and trying 4 years and 8 months between the time of the crime in May of 2003 until the trial in January of 2008, Chrysta endured having to face the defendant in court and reliving the attack through her painful testimony. Throughout what was a very difficult court process, Chrysta and her family remained committed to the criminal justice system. Rhodes is serving 180 years to life.

82 year old **Bonnie Kessler** was brutally attacked in her Curtis Park home, where she lived with her husband for 50 years before he passed away one month earlier. Raymond Dillon beat Bonnie repeatedly, stole jewelry off of her body, tied her hands and feet with cloth and stole her car leaving her for dead. With incredible strength and a will to survive, Bonnie fought to stay conscious, crawled to a phone, called 911 and provided vital information to a dispatcher – later used as evidence in trial. While still recovering from her wounds, Bonnie testified at the preliminary hearing. At that time, Dillon was represented by the Public Defender's Office. Later, Dillon decided to represent himself. At trial, Bonnie was forced to testify and be cross examined by the man who brutally attacked and almost killed her. She was on the stand for 2 days, which took a visible toll on her health. Dillon was convicted on all counts and all enhancement allegations. Some of Bonnie's property was recovered but despite extensive efforts by Sacramento Police Detectives, her husband's wedding ring could not be found. Remarkably, Bonnie chooses to see the positive in her ordeal. Because of the attack, Bonnie moved to an assisted living community and loves her new home and friends. Dillon had 2 prior strikes and was sentenced to 115 years to life.

These individuals will also be special guests at the District Attorney's

10th Annual Public Safety & Community Appreciation Breakfast

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Radisson Hotel - 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento

Host and Master of Ceremonies District Attorney Jan Scully, with special program to include:

Keynote Speaker, Mayor Kevin Johnson

Tribute to fallen officers of the Sacramento Region for their ultimate sacrifice in protecting their communities

Public Safety Community Spirit Award presented to a citizen(s) for their contribution to the safety

Public Safety Breakfast Event Invitation: http://www.sacda.org/community/PDFs/SCDSA_PSB_Flyer_CRX3.pdf